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PROSPECTUS  
OF  
A DAILY PAPER,  
CALLED  
THE PORCUPINE.

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PUBLISHED  
BY MR. COBBETT,  
*In October, 1800.*

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HAVING, in America, *witnessed the fatal effects of revolution*, having seen piety give place to a contempt of religion, plain-dealing exchanged for shuffling and fraud, universal confidence for universal suspicion and distrust; having seen a country, once the seat of peace and good neighbourhood, torn to pieces by faction, plunged, by intriguing demagogues, into never-ceasing hatred and strife: having seen a people, once too fond of what they called liberty to bear the gentle sway of a British King, humbly bend their necks to the yoke, nay, to the very foot, of a set of grovelling despots; having, in short,

short, seen *the crime of rebellion against monarchy* punished by the tormenting, the degrading curse of republicanism ; it is with the utmost astonishment and indignation that I find many of those, who have the press at their command, endeavouring to bring down on my native country the very same species of calamity and disgrace. Notwithstanding the example of America, and the more dreadful example of France, I find the emissaries of the Republican Faction (*for such it really is*) still preaching fanaticism and infidelity, still *bawling for that change which they have the audacity to denominate reform*, still exerting all their nefarious ingenuity in sapping the foundation of the Church and the Throne. Those who want experience of the consequences, may, for aught I know, be excused for conniving at these attempts ; but, for me, who have seen acts, passed by a republican legislature, more fraudulent than forgery or coining ; for me, who have seen republican officers of state offering their country for sale for a few thousand of dollars ; for me, who have seen republican judges become felons, and felons become republican judges ; for me to fold my hands and tamely listen to the insolent eulogists of republican governments and rulers, would be a shameful abandonment of principle, a dastardly desertion of duty. With these sentiments, then, I resume the publication of a Daily Paper, duly apprized, by past experience, of the hostility I shall excite, and firmly resolved to repel it by all the honourable means in my power.

THE PORCUPINE will, of course, embrace all the usual topics of a Newspaper: Parliamentary and Law Reports, Court, City, and Country News, &c.—An early and correct account of those foreign events, which may be considered as *news*, is a thing so much in the beaten track, and so indispensably necessary, that any specific promise on that head would be superfluous; but it may not be amiss to mention, that, to faithful translations from foreign journals, I shall endeavour to add such a commentary as will prevent my paper from being (what too many others are) a mere vehicle for those articles, which are fabricated on the Continents of Europe and America, for the sole purpose of deceiving the too credulous people of this kingdom. The intrigues of the French, the servile, the insidious, the insinuating French, shall be an object of my constant attention. Whether at war or at peace with us, they still dread the power, envy the happiness, and thirst for the ruin of England. Collectively and individually, the whole and every one of them hate us. Had they the means, they would exterminate us to the last man; they would snatch the crutch from our parents, the cradle from our children, and our happy country itself would they sink beneath those waves, on which they now flee from the thunder of our cannon. When we shall sheath the sword it is for our sovereign to say; but, while we retain one drop of true British blood in our veins, we never shall shake hands with this perfidious and sanguinary race, much less shall we make a compromise with their monkey-like manners and tiger-like principles.

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In my endeavours to detect and expose *home-bred* falsehoods and misrepresentations, I do not propose to confine myself to the diurnal and weekly prints; for, though they are certainly a most copious source of mischief, it is probable that more lasting evil is produced by monthly and occasional productions, which are, comparatively speaking, cheaper than newspapers, more conveniently referred to, and much more easily preserved. Without therefore attempting to usurp the critic's chair, which I have neither the capacity nor the leisure to fill, I shall point out to my readers the injurious tendency of works, to which, otherwise, they might incautiously give their encouragement. In the discharge of this, as of every other part of my duty, I shall, I trust, be guided by justice; but, I shall assuredly pay much less regard to the feelings and interests of fanatical and factious booksellers than to the cause of RELIGION AND LOYALTY.

I shall stand in great need of, and, I hope, I shall receive, voluntary assistance, in every department of my Paper, but more particularly in that which will treat of the artful manœuvres of the factious in the country towns, and in the villages. *The unperverted sense of the people is so decided in favour of the established order of things, that the contrivers of innovation are never formidable, except where their real views are unperceived.* It is their hypocritical cant, their clandestine intrigues in the numerous societies and institutions into which they imperceptibly worm themselves; it is their visor, and not their visage, that we have to fear.

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On this topic, therefore, I thus early solicit information from every part of the United Kingdom, being well assured, that, if the malecontents have sometimes succeeded in exciting a spirit of opposition and revolt, their success is to be solely attributed to the want of a regular, well-conducted, widely-extended system of exposure.

It is with no small mortification that I find too many of the periodical publications (as well pamphlets as papers) in the hands of Fanatics and Infidels, all of whom, however numerous their mongrel sects, however opposite their tenets, however hateful their persons to each other, do most cordially unite in their enmity to the national Establishment, and most zealously co-operate for its destruction. Convinced as I am, from the experience of America, as well as from history in general, that an established Church is absolutely necessary to the existence of religion and morality; convinced also, that the Church of England, while she is an ornament, an honour, and a blessing to the nation, is the principal pillar of the Throne, I trust I never shall be base enough to decline a combat with her enemies, whether they approach me in the lank locks of the Sectary, or *the scald crop of the Jacobin*.

Having thus stated what will be the principles of my Paper, it is incumbent on me to say, that those principles will always be *my own*; for, though I utterly reject that insolent maxim of disaffection, which will allow of reward to no talents but such as are exerted in the cause of rebellion;  
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though I hold it to be the duty of men in power to employ the pen as well as the sword in defence of the government committed to their charge: yet, the peculiar circumstances, under which I now come forward, demand from me an explicit and solemn assertion of my *independence*. My undertaking is my own, it was begun without the aid, without the advice, and even without the knowledge, of any person either directly or indirectly connected with the ministry: if, therefore, I hope to yield some trifling support to that ministry, it is not because I have received, or ever shall receive, any gratification at their hands; but *because I am most sincerely persuaded, that, NEXT TO THE VIRTUES OF HIS MAJESTY, and the general loyalty of his subjects, THIS COUNTRY OWES ITS PRESERVATION to the WISDOM AND INTEGRITY OF MR. PITT and his colleagues.* This persuasion shall not, however, debar either me or my correspondents from the exercise of our judgment. The Porcupine never was in America, nor shall it ever be in England, the blind instrument of party, the trumpet of indiscriminate applause. The wisest men may sometimes commit errors, which the most ignorant may perceive: I shall, therefore, feel no restraint BUT THAT OF DECENCY and candour: trusting, from the wise, to a liberal interpretation of my motives, and totally disregarding the displeasure of those who may be weak enough to prefer flattery to truth.

The subjects of a British King, like the sons of every provident and tender father, never know his value till they feel the want of his protection. In the days of youth and  
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of ignorance, I was led to believe, that comfort, freedom, and virtue, were exclusively the lot of Republicans. A very short trial convinced me of my error, admonished me to repent of my folly, and urged me to compensate for the injustice of the opinions I had conceived. During an eight years absence from my country, I was not an unconcerned spectator of her perils, nor did I listen, in silence, to the slanders of her enemies. Though divided from England by the ocean, though her gay fields were hidden, perhaps for ever, from my view, still her happiness and her glory were the objects of my constant solicitude; I rejoiced at her victories, and mourned her defeats; her friends were my friends, and her foes were my foes. Once more returned; once more under the safeguard of that Sovereign, who watched over me in my infancy, and the want of whose protecting arm I have so long had occasion to lament, I feel an irresistible desire to communicate to my countrymen the fruit of my experience; TO SHEW THEM THE INJURIOUS AND DEGRADING CONSEQUENCES OF DISCONTENTMENT, DISLOYALTY, AND INNOVATION; TO CONVINCE THEM, THAT THEY ARE THE FREEST, AS WELL AS THE HAPPIEST OF THE HUMAN RACE; AND, ABOVE ALL, TO WARN THEM AGAINST THE ARTS OF THOSE AMBITIOUS AND PERFIDIOUS DEMAGOGUES, WHO WOULD WILLINGLY REDUCE THEM TO A LEVEL WITH THE CHEATED SLAVES, IN THE BEARING OF WHOSE YOKE I HAVE HAD THE MORTIFICATION TO SHARE.

WM. COBBET.

*Pall Mall, 29th Sept. 1800.*

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